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Letter from Taizé

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Property of
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EUROPEAN MEETING OF YOUNG ADULTS
28 Dec 90 - 2 Jan 91
Prague
TAIZÉ

The next European Meeting
see page 7

The Meetings over Easter in Taizé

11,000 young people from 23 Eastern and Western European countries and from about thirty countries on other continents came to Taizé in the time around Easter, from 1 to 22 April. Some Dutch people brought with them a fine tree branch for Easter Day to give to the youth from the Southern continents. The branch was full of little birds made of wood. In this way, each nationality represented on the hill had received a present when they went off again...

During the last year, the number of young people coming to Taizé every week has grown substantially. This is due in part to the opening-up of the Eastern European countries. In order to prepare a fine welcome for those coming from the East, new dormitories have been built. They were in place for Easter, but were not as welcoming as they should have been. Unforeseen problems prevented the heating from being connected.

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The meetings over Easter enabled a clearer view of this summer's inter-continental meetings. Each week, we will seek to discover what is essential, in two different ways:

- We will go to the wellsprings of faith, to allow an inner life to grow within us. Far from being drawn away from human solidarity, we will discover that everything begins in this inner life. An inner life which leads us to follow Christ on the road of selflessness, the gift of one's self.
- And from this inner life, we will seek how to take part in the construction of the human family throughout the world, between East and West in Europe, but also in Asia, Africa and Latin America, with those who come and go at Taizé.

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Risen Jesus, inward light, we are astounded by the mystery of your continual presence within us.

Why do we go forward again and anew on the road towards you, with our seeking at times as if we were feeling our way? It is because you have already met us on the road.

May those who seek you rejoice! You are light, you enlighten our doubts and even the darkened shadows of our being.

Love of all loving, you transfigure our hearts. You kindle a fire with our inherent thorns ... and within us a way opens up for welcoming the spirit of praise, jubilation of heart.

O Risen One, Saviour of all, to whom else would we go? You have the words which give life to our soul; your light is Gospel, your presence is compassion, wellspring ancient and ever so new.

PRAYER OF BROTHER ROGER, OF TAIZÉ

During 1990:

The FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF TAIZÉ

It was on 21 August 1940 that Brother Roger discovered the village of Taizé, making his home there, and, all alone, beginning a life of prayer, while concealing political refugees.

The 50th anniversary of Taizé will be marked by common prayers at the end of the summer and during the autumn. The first celebration will be held on Saturday evening, September 1st.

In Austria

A pilgrim where I live

During the intercontinental meetings at Taizé, the reflexion every week concentrates partly on opportunities for people to continue the pilgrimage of trust at home. This letter, received from Austria,gives an example of the questions which can come up:

One year ago, we started a pilgrimage between families. A small group meets together monthly at the houses of different families. The aim is to create more communion between us, by sharing our lives in faith. After the meal, we discuss the Gospel for the next Sunday and we finish with a time of prayer.

At the beginning, I was very impatient. It seem to me that we were discussing too much, without touching life's realities. But very quickly I understood that things can never be forced, nor copied from what has been seen elsewhere. In this small group, like in the life of our local church community, propositions are so often understood as judgments on the others! What we say, in wanting to create a deeper communion, ends up by going against the spirit of communion...

So, I understood that, first of all, it is necessary to know how to remain silent. The first step to be made is not to propose something, but to discover a true understanding of the other. After this time of listening, borne with patience, things beyond my wildest imagination became possible. I find the same thing with those who are around me, most of whom are not believers, at work and in the neighbourhood: in the beginning it is essential to seek for a sense of human solidarity, of really understanding people's suffering and their worries, while all the time continuing on my own way with God. Little by little, I can make suggestions and be listened to by people who had previously been more than reticent about my faith.

Every week, there is a prayer in the cathedral. I am astonished that that prayer has been going on for years now. It was hard for me to accept the fact that it is all rather precarious. Since it is not a permanent group, it is always difficult to find somebody to prepare it. But because it is so precarious, it remains truly welcoming. There is no "group", nor "members", and it has no pretentions. In this way it is there to serve the whole Church. It is not a place to settle down in. Each person continues to want to deepen the sense of communion in their own parish." □

In Taizé ▼

The inter-continental **Meetings**

started at Taizé in February. At Easter, people of around sixty different nationalities were present. **This year, for the first time, young people from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will be able to come freely.** For many of them, the pilgrimage of trust on earth has been part of their lives for a long time. They understood that they were supported in their isolation, thanks to successive visits made to the different countries over the last 20 years. And now their presence in Taizé will lead us to consider the questions which have emerged again at this moment in history.

Among other topics, there will be sharing on the following questions, which were already brought up in Poland during the European meeting: How can we be workers for reconciliation? How can we find the energy needed in order to rebuild society with the basic human values which are ours? How can we live out solidarity and complementarity between the countries of Europe? How can we openly witness to our faith? What is the most essential part for parishes, local church communities to play?

Everyone in Europe feels confronted by the acceleration of changes. Certain ways of thinking are evolving at almost the same speed on the other continents. It is therefore even more essential to be able to meet, to search together, and to know how to support one another. Listening to each other is also essential, learning to trust beyond the arbitrary barriers of systems and prejudice. **With their gift for communication, youth from Africa, Asia and Latin America are of great help in this.** Their words often enable us to better understand the radicality of the Gospel. With them, many people grasp that Christ invites people to make a total commitment, a commitment at the heart of human realities, in the Church. ▷

The intercontinental meetings at Taizé

The meetings for young people in Taizé take place around the community of brothers. Together with them, everyone gathers three times a day for common prayer in the church. Going to Taizé is always a very personal choice, going to a place where one seeks the wellsprings of God. Young people from other continents take part in this common seeking, making each week an intercontinental meeting.

For young people between the ages of 17 and 30: Week-long meetings throughout the year. Plan to arrive Sunday afternoon and leave the following Sunday at noon. It is also possible to come for a weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday noon. Those who come as a group will be asked to split up so that they can get to know others from different countries.

Those who wish can choose a group which, in addition to Bible introductions and times of sharing, is responsible for most of the practical tasks. It is also possible to spend a week in silence, to let the Gospel shed light on one's life, with a daily Bible meditation and personal conversations with a brother or a sister. These choices are made upon arrival after discussing the different possibilities with the welcome team.

For some young people, staying for a second or third week in silence or helping with some practical work, in order to deepen their search, proves to be an important experience. Those who wish to do this should speak with a brother or sister during the first week.

For young people between the ages of 15 and 16: Those who accompany groups of young people under 17 must be numerous enough (about one group leader for every eight boys or girls) to help the brothers animate the meetings. Group leaders remain with their group for lodging, meals and meetings, to help the young people to participate fully in everything. Possible dates: Easter holidays,Spring and Autumn half-term holidays. It is also possible for groups who come during the summer to include a small number of 15-16 year olds: please write to ask.

Adults over 30 years: They are welcome for one week, from Sunday to Sunday, preferably in April, May, June, September or October. Arrive Sunday afternoon, depart following Sunday from 11.15am on (Weekend stays also possible; Friday evening to Sunday). Adults form a group together. Bible introductions, times of silence, small group discussions, meals together.
In order to be able to welcome all those who wish to come, we ask adults to come only once a year, and that large groups be comprised not only of adults. Because of the lack of space, we ask adults who need a room or dormitory accomodation in Taizé itself (rather than in a nearby village), to avoid July and August. ▷

Please write in advance, giving the dates you wish to stay, and the number and ages of those intending to come. Please wait for our reply.

Parents with children: From late June to early September, each week, families form a group together. Arrive Sunday (from 3pm onwards) and leave the following Sunday. Children participate in some meetings: at other times, helpers run activities for children in groups according to age. It is important to prepare your children to help them live this week of prayer and sharing. Parents volunteer for a rota to look after the babies during the common prayer. If possible come with tent or caravan (mention on registration form).

It is useful to bring a **Bible.**

Accommodation: all accommodation is very simple. If possible bring a tent, especially at Easter, Pentecost and during the summer. Young people under 30: in tents or in heated dormitories (boys and girls separate). Bring sleeping-bag, blanket and lightweight mattress.
Adults over 30: according to age, in dormitories or in a shared room, (in Taizé or, because of lack of space, in a nearby village). You will be told of your sleeping place when you arrive in Taizé. Bring sheets or sleeping-bag and write well in advance, waiting for our reply.

Participation in costs: there are three funds at Taizé, one for the community and two for the meetings: The community: the community of brothers accepts no donations, no gifts, or personal inheritances, whatsoever for itself. Its only income is from its own work. If there is any surplus at the end of the year, it is given to the Meetings Fund in order to be able to repair the buildings used to receive those who come to Taizé.

The two meetings funds: the meetings in Taizé receive no financial aid from any organisation. The only sources of income are people sharing in the daily expenses on one hand, and voluntary contributions to a Solidarity Fund (thanks to which it is possible to welcome people who cannot pay themselves for the entire cost of their stay).
Currencies of different countries vary in value, so the amount people contribute varies. Each pays according to how they are able on arrival. 1990 suggested prices, in French Francs per day - for young people under thirty: GB, NZ and Scand: 26 to 33, IRL: 23-30, USA, Can., Aus.:35-42. And for adults: GB, NZ and Scand: 57-77 (in tent), 72-92 (dormitory), 87-107 (room). IRL: 49-69 (tent), 60-80 (dormitory), 76-96 (room). USA, Can., Aus.: 75-95 (tent), 85-105 (dormitory), 100-120 (room). Sleeping place is indicated on arrival.Please pay on arrival in French Franc (Cash, Eurocheque or French Franc travellers' cheques). Those who wish, in addition, to give to the Solidarity Fund can do so while in Taizé or by sending a Eurochequr or International Bank Draft in French Francs payable to "Taizé - Solidarity Fund".

Medical insurance: Bring document(s) needed (E1-11 for EC residents) to refund medical costs incurred in France.

Registration for meetings: Send in the completed registration form. A fine welcome for everyone will be made possible in summer, if those who have the choice come in early July, late August or September and rather than the last weeks of July or the first weeks of August.

Travel: Regular coach service from London to Taizé. Depart London at 2200, arrive Taizé 1500 the next day. Depart Taizé 1630, arrive London 0700 next morning. UK departures 1990: Sat 26 May, Sat 2 June, then every Sat to 6 Oct plus 20 Oct. 1990 departures from Taizé: Sun 3 June to 7 Oct plus 28 Oct. Departure points: London; Victoria Methodist Church, Westmoreland Terrace, SW1; Dover; Special pick-up points for groups.
Please book in advance. All details from Nuneaton Coaches, Whiteacre Road, NUNEATON, Warks. CV11 6BN. tel: (0203) 325682/328410 - fax: (0203) 375875 ■

Registration form to be sent to: Meetings, TAIZE-COMMUNITY, 71250 CLUNY, France. (Tel. 85.50.18.18)

FIRST NAME :

FAMILY NAME :

ADDRESS :

(with post code and country)

Tel.: ...../..... Occupation: ..... Age : .....

Please circle "Yes" or "No":

- I wish to participate in the meeting from: ..... to .....
- I will bring a tent: Yes / No
- If you are driving to Taizé or coming by St. Peter's Coaches, please tick:

car ☐ minibus ☐ St. Peter's Coaches ☐

- For the disabled, adult group-leaders, those who cannot sleep on the floor, please fill in the following: I need a bed: Yes / No. **And if "yes", please circle below who you are:**

woman man couple family with....children disabled person helper of disabl.pers.

- I receive the Letter from Taizé: yes / no
- I have been to Taizé: Yes / No (Last stay: month ..... year .....

Created in the image of God

This is part of a bible introduction as given by a brother of the community each morning at Taizé. Following a week of deepening one's understanding of the Bible is one of the choices offered to young people during the intercontinental meetings.

In the hymn which opens the Letter to the Ephesians (Eph 1.3-14), the first blessing by which God offers us fulness of life is that he chose us "before the world was made." He created for something, that we might be "holy"; in other words, that we might be like him and be capable of entering into a relationship with him (Eph 1.4).

The first chapter of the Bible speaks of this same reality, saying that we are created "in the image of God" (Gn 1.26 onwards).

But the hymn in Ephesians goes further, stating precisely what this vocation consists of and how it will take place. God resolved beforehand that we would be for him "adopted sons, through Jesus Christ" (Eph 1.5). Elsewhere, St. Paul uses sonship as a definition of the Christian faith:

"When the fulness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law, so that we could receive adoption as sons. And as you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal 4.4-6; cf. Rm 8.14-16)

Using other words, St. John in turn tells us the same thing. At the beginning of his Gospel, he describes the coming of the Word of God into the world: "To those who accepted him, he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name" (Jn 1.12).

How does this adoption as children offered by God show itself? St. Paul sees it as a kind of resemblance: Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the First-Born of all creation" (Col 1.15). It is a fundamental truth of the Bible that God is beyond all that human beings can imagine or conceive: "no-one has ever seen God" (Jn 1. 18a; cf. Ex 33.20).

But the Good News of our salvation consists exactly in the fact that the "invisible God" makes himself visible and tangible through the coming of Jesus Christ among us (Jn 1.18b; cf. 1 Jn 1.1).

The Greek word for "image" is "icon": by his relationship of perfect closeness with the Father, Jesus, God's only Son, reveals his face to us. When Philip asks Jesus: "Show us the Father," he replies, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14. 8 onwards).

Christ is thus an icon of the Father in the midst of our world. He is also, according to Col 1.15 onwards, the model of the creation, the source of its meaning. So, if by Christ we are called to become sons and daughters of God, it follows that our vocation is to be an image or icon of God. It is our task to communicate, by our lives, something of the invisible God, so that the world may believe in him. Being an icon of Christ, and therefore of God, is making him credible by the life that we lead.

In the Letter to the Romans, St. Paul explains this, using a very dense phrase. He says that God "chose us beforehand to be moulded into the image of his Son, so that he should be the eldest of many brothers" (Rom 8.29). God acts: he begins with a movement of love (he "chooses" us), then he creates us according to the pattern of his Son in order to fulfil this plan. Then he sends that same Son into the world, to enable us to fulfil our vocation by following him.

Through these texts we understand also that being in the image of God is a dynamic reality. Far from being something that happened at the moment of our birth, for example, we must live it out each day throughout the development of our life. The Eastern Churches express this reality using Gn 1.26: created in the image of God, it is our task to acquire his resemblance.

Using other words, we could say: the act of creation is not simply something that happened "in the beginning", it is a permanent relationship with God. God is creating at every instant, offering us at every moment the possibility to become what in truth we are, by the transfiguration of our being, more and more, into his image.

How does this transfiguration take place? It is not so much the fruit of human activity, it is more the fruit of a contemplative welcoming of God. According to St. Paul, "all of us... reflecting (or contemplating) like mirrors the glory of the Lord, are being transfigured into the image that we reflect in brighter and brighter glory: this is the working of the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3.18). Eventually, we become what we are contemplating, like a mirror being transformed into the portrait of whoever it reflects. "Wherever your treasure lies," Jesus says to us, "there will be your heart too" (Mt 6.21).(Mt 6.21).

God is creating at every instant, giving us at every moment the opportunity to become what in truth we are, transfiguring our being more and more into his image.

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

Meditating on the word

July

1 SUN Rm 6.3-11 • ***Mt 10.39-42***
Jesus told those he sent out: Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

2 Mon Is 40.1-5 • ***Mt 9.9-13***
As he walked, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me". And he got up and followed him.

3 Tue Ep 2.19-22 • ***Jn 20.24-29***
St THOMAS Jesus said to Thomas: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

4 Wed Mt 9.18-26 • ***Is 40.9-11***
The Lord tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.

5 Thu Mt 9.35-38 • ***Is 40.25-28***
The Lord says: Why do you complain, my people, saying, "My way is hidden from the Lord, my cause is disregarded by God"? Do you not know? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the world; he does not tire or grow weary.

6 Fri Is 40.29-31 • ***Mt 10.1-10***
Jesus sent out the twelve, saying: Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Freely you have received, freely give.

7 Sat Mt 10.22-25 • ***Is 41.8-10***
The Lord says to his people: I took you from the ends of the earth, I have chosen you and will not cast you off. Fear not, for I am with you.

8 SUN Zc 9.9-10 • ***Mt 11.28-30***
Jesus said: Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

9 Mon Is 41.17-20 • ***Mt 11.1-6***
Jesus said: Go back and report what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the dead are raised to life, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

10 Tue Mt 11.7-15 • ***Is 42.5-7***
The Lord says to his servant: I have called you in righteousness. I will take take you by the hand and shape you. I will make you a light to the nations.

11 Wed Mt 11.25-27 • ***Is 42.10,16***
The Lord says: I shall lead my people by a road that is unknown to them. I shall turn the darkness into light before them.

12 Thu Is 43.1-4 • ***Mt 12.1-8***
Jesus said: It is mercy that pleases me, not sacrifice.

13 Fri **Mt 12.9-14** • *Is 43.10-13*
You yourselves are my witnesses, declares the Lord, you are the servant whom I have chosen.

14 Sat Mt 12.15-21 • ***Is 43.18-20***
God says: Do not dwell upon the past, look, I am doing something new.

15 SUN Is 55.10-11 • ***Mt 13.1-9***
Jesus said: A sower went out to sow. Some seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

16 Mon 1 Co 1.1-9 • ***Mt 13.10-23***
Jesus said: The seed which was sown in good soil is like someone who hears the Word and understands it; that person bears fruit.

17 Tue 1 Co 1.17-25 • ***Mt 13.44-46***
Jesus said: The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field that someone has found; he hides it again, and in his joy sells everything he has and buys that field.

18 Wed Mt 13.53-58 • ***1 Co 1.26-31***
God chose things that by human standards are weak to confound the strong. God chose what is lowly and despised in the eyes of the world.

19 Thu Mt 14.13-21 • ***1 Co 2.7-12***
We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that comes from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us

20 Fri Mt 16.13-20 • ***1 Co 3.5-16***
Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

21 Sat **Mt 16.21-28** • *1 Co 3.18-23*
Paul writes: All things are yours; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

22 SUN Ws 12.13-19 • ***Mt 13.31-35***
Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. Of all seeds it is the smallest, yet once it has grown it is the biggest of plants.

23 Mon 1 Co 4.1-5 • ***Jn 4.1-14***
Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is who is saying to you, "Give me something to drink", you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.

24 Tue **Jn 4.15-26** • *1 Co 4.9-13*
We are fools for Christ. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we offer comfort in return.

25 Wed **Mt 20.20-28** • *2 Co 4.7-11*
St JAMES We carry the treasure of God's glory in earthen vessels so that it may be quite clear that the radiance comes from God, not from us.

26 Thu 1 Co 12.4-13 • ***Jn 4.27-38***
Jesus said: My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to complete his work.

27 Fri Jn 4.39-42 • ***1 Co 13.1-7***
Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous, boastful or conceited. Love does not seek its own advantage, it does not take offence or harbour grievances. Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.

28 Sat Jn 4.46-54 • ***1 Co 13.8-13***
Paul writes: These three things remain: Faith, hope and love. And the greatest of them is love.

29 SUN Rm 8.28-30 • ***Mt 13.44-46***
Jesus said: The kingdom of heaven is like a trader looking for precious pearls; when he finds one of great value, he goes, sells all he has and buys it.

30 Mon **Mt 18.1-5** • *Is 44.1-4*
The Lord says: Do not be afraid, my servant whom I have chosen. I shall pour out my Spirit on your offspring.

31 Tue Mt 18.12-14 • ***Is 44.21-23***
Sing for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has acted! Mountains, burst into song, for the Lord has redeemed his people!

Johannine Hours

Romans 5.1-11

Johannine hours are suggested as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer, in the midst of our life at home. During the course of the day take a couple of hours to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, the group (3 to 10 people) meet together to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

Christ puts an end to all judgement which could weigh upon us. For God makes us "righteous", in other words, he removes from our lives everything which goes against his plan of love for us, and gives us our rightful place in a communion with Christ. By trusting alone, we are in peace (v.2), a peace which is also called reconciliation (v.11), where there is an absence of hostilty and anguish.

This peace is not a kind of passivity; it is dynamic, turned at every moment towards the gift of God. "We joyfully entrust ourselves in the hope of God's glory". The glory of God raised Christ from the dead (Rm 6.4), and, in confident joy, we let God accomplish acts of resurrection in our own lives. In "tribulations",where there is no way out, during trials, when the road becomes impassable, trust, and even joy, are possible because God who gives life to the dead loves us.

His love is "poured into our hearts" (v.5). Like water, once it has been poured out, cannot be held back, it floods all that is around, in the same way God, by the Holy Spirit, gives his love without reserve. What will always characterise this love, is that God has also loved "his enemies" by it, those who were incapable of responding to him. And so hope will not deceive because God will never love us less than he did at the moment where he gave everything to us, his forgiveness and the Holy Spirit.

- What helps me to move from turning in upon myself, and from fear to peace with God?
  How can I look towards God, who raised Christ from the dead, even in situations where there seems to be no way out?

August

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

1 Wed Is 45.2-8 • ***Mt 18.20-22***
Jesus said: When two or three meet in my name, I am there among them.

2 Thu Is 45.18-19 • ***Mt 19.16-22***
Jesus said to a rich young man: If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.

3 Fri Mt 19.23-26 • ***Is 45.22-24***
There is no other God but me, says the Lord. Turn to me and you will be saved, all you ends of the earth.

4 Sat Mt 12.46-50 • ***Is 46.3-9***
The Lord says to his people: I have carried you since you were conceived. Until your old age I shall be the same, I shall sustain and save you.

5 SUN Is 55.1-3 • ***Mt 14.13-21***
Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, Jesus gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, who gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.

6 Mon 2 P 1.16-19 • ***Mt 17.1-9***
TRANSFIGURATION On the mountain of the Transfiguration a bright cloud covered the disciples and a voice said: This is my beloved Son, on whom my favour rests; listen to him.

7 Tue Mt 20.1-16 • ***Is 48.20b-21***
Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it to the ends of the earth: the Lord has redeemed his servant.

8 Wed Is 49.13-15 • ***Mt 20.17-19***
Jesus said: The Son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn him to death and turn him over to be mocked, scourged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised up again.

9 Thu Mt 20.29-33 • ***Is 50.4-7***
The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue, so that I may know how to comfort the one who is exhausted.

10 Fri Is 52.13-15 • ***Mt 21.1-11***
See, your king is approaching, humble and riding on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

11 Sat Is 53.1-5 • ***Jn 7.37-39***
Jesus cried out: Let anyone who is thirsty come to me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink!

12 SUN 1 K 19.9-13 • ***Mt 14.22-33***
Jesus came towards his disciples, walking on the water, and they were terrified; but at once he said to them: Courage! It is I. Do not be afraid.

13 Mon Mt 21.13-17 • ***Is 54.8,10-14***
Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, my faithful love for you will not be shaken, says the Lord.

14 Tue Mt 21.23-27 • ***Is 55.6-9***
Seek the Lord while he is near. Turn to our God, he pardons freely.

15 Wed 1 Co 15.20-26 • ***Lk 1.39-56***
THE VIRGIN MARY Elizabeth said to Mary: Blessed is she who believed that the promise the Lord made her would be fulfilled.

16 Thu Mt 21.28-32 • ***Mi 4.1-4***
Days will come when many peoples will come and say, "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, so that he may teach us his ways." And they will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into bill-hooks.

17 Fri Mt 21.33-42 • ***Mi 6.6-8***
This is what the Lord wants of you, only this: to act justly, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.

18 Sat Mt 22.15-22 • ***Mi 7.18-20***
Who is a God like you, Lord, pardoning sins and delighting in steadfast love?

19 SUN Is 56.1-7 • ***Jn 6.51-58***
Jesus said: I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

20 Mon Jn 5.1-9 • ***Ga 2.16-21***
Paul writes: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

Meditating on the word

21 Tue Ga 3.23-29 • ***Jn 5.10-18***
Jesus, persecuted because he worked miracles on the Sabbath, replied: My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I am at work too.

22 Wed Ga 4.1-7 • ***Jn 5.19-23***
Jesus said: As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

23 Thu Jn 5.24-29a • ***Ga 5.1,13-18***
You were called to be free. Do not use your freedom for self-indulgence but to serve one another in love.

24 Fri Jn 8.1-11 • ***Ga 5.22-25***
Since the Spirit is our life, let our actions be guided by the Spirit.

25 Sat **Jn 8.12** • *Ga 6.6-10*
The one who sows in the Spirit, will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

26 SUN Rm 11.33-36 • ***Mt 16.13-20***
Jesus asked his disciples: "Who do people say I am?" "Some say John the Baptist," they answered, "some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But you," he said, "who do you say I am?" Peter spoke up and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

27 Mon Am 5.14-15,22-24 • ***Jn 12.20-26***
Jesus said: Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant will also be.

28 Tue Am 7.12-15 • ***Jn 12.44-47***
Jesus said: Whoever sees me sees the one who sent me.

29 Wed **Jn 13.33-35** • *Am 8.11*
The days are coming, says the Lord, when I shall send hunger upon the land; not hunger for food or thirst for water, but a hunger to hear the Word of God.

30 Thu Am 9.11-15 • ***Jn 14.1-3***
Jesus said: There are many rooms in my Father's house.

31 Fri **Jn 14.4-10** • *Hab 1.12-13; 2.1-4*
I shall stay awake, watching to see what God will say to me. And the Lord answered me and said, "The just will live by their faithfulness."

Johannine Hours

Hosea 14.2-9

Johannine hours are suggested as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer, in the midst of our life at home. During the course of the day take a couple of hours to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, the group (3 to 10 people) meet together to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

I will love them with all my heart" (v.5). God loves his people with a love that is given without conditions or ulterior motives, a peaceful love. He had sought to draw his people to him in a relationship of love. Burdened by indifference and refusal, he passionately calls them to return to him. Now, it is as if he was speaking only to himself. There are no more vibrant calls to conversion, no more "Thus says the Lord." The prophet alone has heard in this silence of God the irrevocable decision: "I love them,I will fall upon them like dew."

The prophet calls quite simply for a return to God. He asks nothing difficult, no sacrifices or guilty consciences. God's love has shown itself to him to be so trustworthy that there is no need for this. Each person may approach God and say: "Remove all iniquity and take what is good" (v.3). God has compassion on all those who are ill through disappointments and abandonment, who have no more strength to get up again.

Whoever consents, before all else, to being loved by God, is filled to overflowing with the beauty of the lily, the strength of the poplar and the splendour of the olive tree. In the sight of God (v.9) they will become fruitful.

● What enables me to return to God, in all simplicity, like a child? How can I rejoice over the beauty that God gives to my life and to the lives of others?

ontinued from page 1

uring the European meeting in Po-nd, Brother Roger emphasised at "after years of mistrust, fear nd violence, Europe will be con-tructed upon trust of heart and the ust of faith, not upon worry and nguish. It would be unthinkable to ake up one fine morning and find urselves immersed in a functional ociety, with all the means of high echnology, but where meaning to e could no longer be found and here was no longer the deep-down at is needed for building com-union within the human family."

o, it is more necessary than ever o continue a pilgrimage of trust on arth. Each person lives out this pil-rimage in their daily existence, in heir own neighbourhood, town or egion. The pilgrimage is sustained y important gathering points along he way, the meetings arranged om time to time:

in Europe, the European meeting om 28 December 1990 to 2 January 991 in Prague.

in Asia, a meeting in Manila, in the hilippines, from 22 to 25 February 991.

□□□

n Easter Eve, Brother Roger spoke about n African brother who, the next morning uring the Eucharist, made his life-long ommitment in the community: "Saying es for ever because of Christ,he will be vailable for his whole life to live out the arable of community with his brothers. appy the community which becomes an oyss of kindness! He will be seeking to ve the words of Christ, together with his rothers: Go, sell all that you have, give he money to the poor, and then come, fol-w me! For our community, having no apital, no reserves, accepting nothing, either gifts, nor donations, nor personal heritences, absolutely nothing, commits s in an adventure of simplicity, inner mplicity and simplicity in daily life."

□□□

On Easter Morning, the Eucharist vas lead by a priest from India. At he end of the service, the bells egan to ring at the moment when he Easter greeting was given in all he languages:

Christ is risen

He is risen indeed.

or Easter, a letter had arrived from ebanon: "We have been hiding in he cellars for 55 days and I am writ-ng to entrust once again to your rayer the people of Lebanon. hanks to the love of God and to uman friendship, we are continu-ng to hold firm with a wild hope." □

Prague - European meeting

Witnesses of faith to discover

Everyone knows of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia which showed the strength of the unity of its people. The conviction that the truth is stronger than oppression won the revolution, even though difficulties remain. In order to go beyond fears, bitterness, and possible differences, much discernment and perseverence are now needed.

Many people know of the thirst for God among the youth of Czechoslovakia, who came in such large numbers to the meetings in Pécs, Hungary, and Wroclaw in Poland. They had been so isolated from the rest of Europe and they have a great desire for meeting and discussion. This will be the first time that they will be able to take part in the intercontinental meetings in Taizé, together with many others from the other countries of Eastern Europe. Each week of the summer, several coaches will ferry people between Prague and Taizé.

In Czechoslovakia, up until just a few months ago, all Christian life was limited to the services in the parishes. Governmental control prevented all development. The Church was only visible as historic buildings. The parishes were not able to organise activities enabling people to meet and support each other in their initiatives.

A visible faith

In a new neighbourhood of Prague, for example, there is only one small church serving 120,000 inhabitants. Almost everywhere, the life of the local Christian communities is to be reconstructed. Among the young people, faith, searching for God, is visibly showing itself. Everywhere, things which were previously hidden are coming coming out into the light: priests who were ordained in secret, laypeople who clandestinely led youth groups...

Many people can now discover the visible dimension of the Church, learning what it is, finding out how to participate. For many groups, it is now becoming possible to be closely linked to the life of the Church, bringing with them the richness that each was able to discover or develop in the past. Those who are already preparing, see above all in the European meeting an occassion for deepening the sense of community between Christians and for giving a visible sign of this.

Close at hand and yet unknown

From the very beginning, the Christians of Czechoslovakia took part fully in the great changes in their society, going through the events of the past months together. It is now essential for them to find a way for sharing with Christians of other countries, and also other continents, the things which fill them with life, with their richness and their expectations.

Everyone taking part in the European meeting in Prague can be witnesses to a life lived in the Gospel, at the heart of Europe, and yet unknown in the West. By their presence and the witness they bear, they will taking part in the changeover towards a new way of being present in society.

Listening to the CONTINENTS

Rumania

Going beyond hatred

"It is difficult to describe all the impressions felt during our three week visit to Rumania, after the revolution of December 89. It is difficult to distinguish and understand the forces which brought about the fall of the dictatorship. We were used to hearing of this country in very dramatic terms - how could we forget the images of the violent combats which were shown live on television screens throughout the world? But we set off searching for evidence of kindness, generosity, of readiness to live out forgiveness and reconciliation. In one word, we were looking for all the witnesses of Christ, who are continually present in the wounds of our troubles. "Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice, " that was our only programme, but, as so often, the reality went beyond our expectations.

We discovered a whole religious universe, the expression of a society which had been mistreated, but which knew how to keep alive a thirst for the Gospel. A society which, in the limits imposed by circumstances, has been able to sustain searching for God, especially among the younger generations. The Orthodox Church, the largest in the country, paid a high price: priests and laypeople were arrested by the thousand, all catechism was forbidden, etc. But at the same time, the Church was able to exert an important spiritual influence through the radiance of the monastaries, beacons of liturgical and religious life in the country. They were the places for meetings and pilgrimages for many young Rumanians. Many of those whom we met bore on their faces the marks of the suffering they had been through and expressed their difficulty to go on hoping. We also came closer to Gospel realities, to the spirit of the Beatitudes.

"Blessed are the poor, those who weep...": in the dramatic history of Rumania, particularly during the most difficult moments, you can find the fire of love and charity radiating a marvellous warmth.

The Community of Taizé has no capital reserves, it does not accept any gifts, donations, family inheritences or any other contribution for itself whatsoever. Its only income comes from its own work.

However, at the present time, Operation Hope is in need of contributions for two necessities outside of Taizé:

1. to defray part of the cost of the journeys of the young people from Asia, Africa and Latin America, who come for the meetings. There is a large deficit at the moment in this.

2. New Testaments (extracts) for young people, to be printed and sent by Taizé to Eastern Europe.

For these two necessities, contributions may be sent to:

UK: "Operation Hope", Bank Account no. 44495090, Coutts and Co., Duncannon Branch, 440 Strand, LONDON WC2R 0QS
USA: "Operation Hope", c/o Taizé, 413 W. 48th St., New York NY 10036,
IRELAND, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA, etc.: contributions may be sent in the same way as sums for subscriptions to the Letter from Taizé, making sure to indicate with your payment "for Operation Hope".

Poland

Prayer and sharing

The youth of the parish of Andrzei Bobola in Lodz describe the follow-up to the meeting in Wroclaw: "Even before the European meeting, we thought that it would be good to do something for the young people of our city. It is the second largest city in Poland (1 million inhabitants), and is an industrial city, mostly in textiles in which many of our mothers work. The city is submerged in monotony. Its young people are in need of a great spiritual impetus.

We came back from Wroclaw full of vigour, joyfulness and the desire to begin to make the earth fit to live in for all those around us. The experience of the European meeting showed us how much we needed times of silent prayer and simple sharing, without polemics, in order to see more clearly the meaning of what is going on around us.

We started a prayer in our parish. And then, encouraged by the parish priests, we prepared a bigger meeting by inviting young people from the neighbouring parishes. For this, we went to their parish, and soon others from all over the city wanted to join in. Everyone in the parish wants to help with one of the preparation groups: some for the singing, others for the common prayer and still others help by visiting the families who will receive those coming for the meeting.

Since our parish is not very big, certain families will be welcoming up to 10 people. Like in Wroclaw, the scouts will put up the tents and prepare the tea. It was also necessary speed up the work being done on the new church, in order to have it ready on time. A whole team of men and young people are working on it night and day.Common prayer will be inspersed with times of reflexion on the most urgent questions in our daily life. On the Sunday, the meeting will come to a close with everybody taking part in the Eucharist, celebrated by the bishop, in the new church. We have already thought of the next stage: a pilgrimage to Taizé during the summer. We would like many people to be able to go,and for that we are doing odd jobs in the city in order to earn the money.

South Africa

Relief for the refugees

"The situation in our city is really grim. Just when we were all heaving a sigh of relief that Nelson Mandela was free, everything exploded again much worse than before. There is no mercy for cheap human life. But Christ brings hope to our situation. The churches of the area are working together to bring food and relief to the thousands of refugees, some of whom have fled their homes for the second time this year. On Palm Sunday, there was an ecumenical service and procession through the streets and a memorial of flowers on a cross was built, in memory of a whole group of people who were killed in that same street. In our time, so marked by so much opposition to one another, it was remarkable to see people from many different groups and institutions gathered together for the service.

Letter from Taizé

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